

## 3,129 Steps

Written by Gayle Nobel

Wednesday, 14 March 2012 18:33 - Last Updated Wednesday, 14 March 2012 19:09

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Kyle came out of his most recent cycle over the weekend. Hurrah! On Monday, I didn't want to send him to his day program because his 1:1 aide was not going to be there and the readjustment of the first day back might have been much harder without her.

How should we fill the day? Kyle had been home for eight days so an out of the house activity was definitely in order. It was a gorgeous day in Phoenix, Kyle was racing around the house with exuberance, and I was pining for my hike. North Mountain, with it's paved trail, and close proximity to our neighborhood, was calling out to us.

As soon as I opened his door, Kyle bolted out of the car to the trail. He took the first leg at a run before stopping to survey where we were. The beginning part is very steep but it soon mellows out to a gentle upward climb.

Hiking with Kyle is stop and start. At times, he is running up the trail, then at others, he needs a long break to stop and smell the roses and gather himself up. We went from running to stopping with everything else in between with lots of water breaks.

I decided I would have no agenda for our pace or how far we got. This hike was so that we could spend time doing something enjoyable together while getting exercise. It was not going to be at my usual pace and that was ok. What a gorgeous sunny, but not yet too hot, day in Phoenix and how grateful I was that Kyle was able to have a life again after the rough waters of the previous week. Life's simple pleasures are the best.

I was thoroughly enjoying my time outside, being with Kyle, and seeing him enjoy himself. People watching was fun too. I marveled at the variety of shapes, sizes, and ages going up and down the trail. Since the hike is short, many people do the trail more than once so some of the faces became familiar. My favorite was the mom pushing her toddlers in a double stroller with a baby in a pack on her front while chatting with her friend. I noticed her friend had the stroller when they passed us on the way down and I was hoping she had a really good grip.

Swirling thoughts:

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*We should really do more of this especially before it gets too hot.*

*Maybe if Kyle had some extra doses of endorphins, it would help ease the debilitating cycles every month. Note to self.*

*Phoenix is so beautiful when it's not blistering hot. Days like this are why we live here.*

*Kyle is suddenly keeping such a good pace, we may make it to the top where we can eat our almonds on the only bench on the mountain.*

*Wow, it takes so much energy for Kyle to do this, he must burn twice the calories as the average person.*

*The amount of mental energy seems exceed the physical energy.... his focus to keep himself moving is a bigger challenge than actually moving. Go Kyle.*

About 3/4's of the way up, my swirling thoughts were interrupted by an abrupt stop. Uh oh, fatigue? My instinct told me it was time to turn around. Even though the downhill was less strenuous, Kyle didn't really want to walk when we turned around.

With coaxing, we headed down the mountain VERY slowly. The mid morning sun was beating down on us and our water was going fast. Walk a little, stop a lot, repeat. This was our pace down the mountain until Kyle suddenly came to a halt. Gently but firmly, he grabbed both my wrists, looked me in the eye and told me he was not moving any more. Clearly, he was DONE with this hike.

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It was only 5 minutes (at MY pace) and a few switchbacks to the car but he didn't care. In fact, he looked as if he might have felt a little sick. Desperately, I looked to the side of the trail and there was a rock and possible resting spot. Nature's divine intervention because there were not many of these on this trail!

It was easy for me to sit down but very challenging for Kyle. The motor planning involved on shaky terrain and rugged slant of the rock was a huge deal for him. I was reminded of how easily we take for granted all the things our body does for us without thought. For Kyle, anything out of the ordinary pattern of movement requires a lot of thought and effort. Sometimes, he would rather flee the scene than work through it.

With my support and a little nudge, I got him to sit down. Phew! No shade, but at least a resting spot. Several people passed us on the way up and then passed us on their way back down again. We sat for a long time and I was starting to worry. What if he won't do the required walking to get to the car? Am I going to have to call for a rescue and how would that go? No, I decided I would wait as long as necessary and we would walk down. I was grateful to see more color in Kyle's lips again.

Eventually, after long while, I convinced him to get up and we slowly made our way to the car.

3,129 steps, 1.43 miles, 3 hours quality time with my son. Grateful.

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Rock sent from heaven